

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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1957 JAPAN CHRISTIAN YEARBOOK JUST OUT

An excellent source book on the current situation of Christian Work in Japan, the 1957 Japan Christian Yearbook is just of the press and should be purchased by all persons who wish to keep abreast of developments in this country. The 46th in the series, this is the first to be edited by the NCC following the transfer of this responsibility by the Fellowship of Christian Missionaries. Fifteen Japanese church leaders and eight missionary contributors provide a scope ranging from political conditions and trends to the very latest information on evangelistic work. A Missionary Directory, with telephone numbers, a list of Mission Boards and Societies supporting work here, and statistical tables of 78 Japanese denominations, make this edition one of the best - an indispensable source book of Christian activities in present day Japan. H.Y.

NO REASON TO REVISE JAPAN'S PEACE CONSTITUTION SAYS MODERATOR

On Aug. 15, the 12th anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II, the Moderator of the United Church of Christ in Japan, the Rev. Ken Muto, recalled that there was terrible confusion and the people of Japan seemed to be in a state of stupor at war's end. Now, however, Japan is at last achieving full independence again and, reconstruction is almost complete. But, said the moderator, "elements of reaction are again becoming visible". Referring to the 3rd World Conference Against A-H bombs just concluded in Tokyo, the Rev. Muto said, "it is only natural that this movement is promoted with earnestness here where people have suffered serious disasters from the dropping of the world's first A-bomb. We hope that this movement will not be just a political gesture but that it will develop into a world wide movement to drive out all war from the world and to secure peace and the universal brotherhood of all of mankind.

However, we see our National Government giving consideration now to a revision of our Peace Constitution, and already a special governmental committee has been organized for this purpose. But I cannot see any reason for its revision at the present time. Some of our people may feel a kind of nostalgia for the kind of nationalism we had before the war but this is a most dangerous idea.

We feel that Japan has a new mission and the present war-renouncing constitution is central to that mission. No other nation in the world is without an Army - except Japan. Japan must show the world a new road to world peace. True we have a self-defense force - but we must exhibit to the world the way of a nation without an army.

In this connection our present constitution is a kind of holy constitution, which could be a new basis of international ethics and human morality. It is necessary for us to teach this to all the countries of the world and we should not consider revising it.

ASIAN COUNCIL OF ECUMENICAL MISSION DISCUSSED

Recently the head of the Asian Council of Ecumenical Mission, Mr. Kyotan of Burma, and Mr. Nu Han of Korea (Pastor of Keijo Presbyterian church there - Mr. Rhee is a member here) came to Japan and for 2 days held discussions with Rev. Niwa, and Rev. Okada of the United Church and with Rev. Germany, acting Secretary of the IBC Field Committee relative to the reorganization of the ACEM which was voted this past spring at the WCC meeting in Indonesia. The ACEM Executive Committee meets in Calcutta Sept. 15 at which time reorganization will be effected. This new council in East Asia will be discussed at the IMC meeting in Ghana, Africa, this winter. Japan's participation is under study now by leaders of the United Church.

FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

After meeting for a number of years in Nojiri the annual conference of the Fellowship of Christian Missionaries was again held in the Union Church in Karuizawa with the motto, "Christ Frees and Unites." Following the afternoon worship service at which the Rev. David Vikner of the Augustana Lutheran Mission preached the sermon, the evening was devoted to an address by Dr. Egon Hessel, an independent missionary, on missionary strategy and to brief but pertinent and inspiring remarks by Miss Mable Baggs of the Church Missionary Society and the Rev. Thomas Grubbs of the Presbyterian, USA (IBC), on practical experiences in their every day life. The Rev. Raymond Hammer of the Church Missionary Society gave two addresses and the Rev. John Hesselink led the conference in two Bible Study sessions.

The high point in the program was on the second evening when Professor Negishi of St. Paul's University, who was baptized by the first protestant missionary, Bishop C. M. Williams of the Anglican Church, Dr. J. M. Winther of the Lutheran Missionary Association, the Rev. Frank Cary of the Congregational Christian Church (IBC) and the Rev. Charles Germany, acting secretary of the Interboard Missionary Field Committee, spoke on the subject, "Reflections on 100 years of Protestant Missions." The Reverend Dr. William Tucker of Kobe Union Church preached the closing sermon. New Officers for the ensuing year are Dr. Raymond Hammer, President, Dr. Olaf Hansen, Vice President, Miss Hazel Hughes, secretary and Paul Oltman, treasurer. In addition to the above a committee of seven to arrange for the Centennial year and a publication committee were elected.

WCTU ACTIVE IN ANTI-PROSTITUTION DRIVE

Providing the initial impulse that led to the establishment 3 years ago of the National Council for Anti-prostitution, an organization that had a hand in securing passage of an Anti-prostitution law in the National Diet in 1955, the Japan WCTU is now engaged in a fight against any postponement of the enforcement of the criminal section of this law scheduled for April, 1958. A "countermeasures committee" is reported to be pressuring the Government to postpone enforcement of the law in order to give more time for a change of employment of the prostitutes and their owners. On Aug. 1 and 2 when word of this action reached the WCTU and the Anti-prostitution Council, representatives immediately went to the Democratic-Liberal Party headquarters, to leading newspaper editors, and direct to the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Kishi's Chief Secretary said to the ladies, "let your minds be at ease, for at a meeting of the Prime Minister with the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health and Welfare it was decided to enforce the law as scheduled next April. There will not be any postponement." The Minister of Justice (Karasawa), in answer to a question during proceedings in the National Diet is reported to have also said that he will enforce the Anti-prostitution law fully from next April.

A MISSIONARY'S "SUNDAY AFTERNOON"

Typical of missionary work in country areas of Japan is the following from a report dated July, 1957 telling of the missionary's activities on a recent Sunday afternoon, sandwiched in between a morning worship service in one town and an evening service in another: "Last Sunday we called on all our neighbors, left some Christian tracts, and spoke with each neighbor about Christ and the Christian way of life." (this included 6 home visits and a visit with a neighboring widow and her daughter whom they met on the road).

What about the results of this pastoral work at the grass roots level week in and week out? The missionary's report continues: "Miracles are still being worked in this modern 20th century. Born a midget and a cripple, for over 20 years, Komeda Sensei never walked. Then he became a Christian and is now walking the streets of his village as an evangelistic Christian Pastor!

"Tuesday a young man came to our home who has been helping in our English night school. He is not a Christian and has been a rather hard person to learn to know. However, a week ago he was sick in bed for several days with a high fever. Since that time he has sought out our company and been open to the preaching of the Gospel. Both of us remarked after his visit here how much he had changed already in his attitudes. We like to talk with him now. How wonderful it will be when he accepts Christ as His Lord.

"Another young man for whom we have been praying, the son of our former landlord, came to see us. He is now attending college in Tokyo and we have been wondering how he would make out. We were happy to learn that he is attending church. He is the first in his family to express an interest in Christianity. We see miracles in the way prayers are answered for the work we are trying to do here for Christ.

"Just recently a man entered one of our supporting churches back in the states, saw a letter from us in the bulletin, and put in the offering a contribution of \$200 for one of our churches in Japan! He was not a member of that Stateside church and we have never met him, but God used him to help our work here."

"This is but one phase of a missionary's work. Multiply that, however, by 2,528 missionaries (including 378 United Church missionaries), and it comes to a sizeable contribution. Cooperating closely with 2,697 ordained Protestant ministers, and 1,490 unordained workers, these 2,528 Protestant missionaries as fraternal workers are laboring day in and day out that Japan may be won to Christ.

THE THIRD WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST A-H BOMBS

The Third World Conference Against A-H Bombs, sponsored by the Japan Council Against A-H Bombs, was held in Tokyo Aug. 12-16. Preliminary sessions with some 150 or more delegates present were held for five days at the Hitotsubashi Public Hall in Kanda. 10,000 attended the main sessions at the Tokyo Municipal Gymnasium.

Support and cooperation was solicited on a world-wide scale and a month ago newspapers reported that such notables as Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Dr. Martin Niehmoler, Dr. Max Von Lane, and Charlie Chaplin had agreed to the use of their names as sponsors. In Japan the names of Toyohiko Kagawa and Dr. Michio Kozaki appeared as supporters, but in general the religious world, including Christians, in spite of practically universal opposition to nuclear weapons, have shown no great enthusiasm for this movement. The reason is that (1) the council has maintained close relations with the Communist dominated World Peace Council, (2) radical and communist elements in Japan use the council as a sounding-board for their ideas, and (3) although claiming to be politically neutral, the Council vigorously attacks Britain and the U.S. but maintains a mild attitude toward the U.S.S.R.

"MORAL EDUCATION" IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Of great concern both within secular and Christian educational circles right now in Japan is the problem of public morals. A general feeling seems to exist that some course in the elementary school grades on character building is necessary. The Social Science Course inserted by the Occupation into Japan's educational system is deemed inadequate to cope with the shift from the Imperial Rescript on Education as the pre-war basis of public morals, to the less tangible ones undergirding democracy.

Dr. Hidejiro Kato, Professor at Kansei Gakuin, speaking about this problem says, "Japan before the war had Buddhist and Confucian cultures as the backbone of the moral life of the people with an ideal of building a gentleman's nation according to the way of the king (Confucius). People were taught to develop their national power by building up their military strength and the material wealth of the nation with the Emperor at the center of the nation's life and his rescript the foundation of moral teaching. Now the Imperial Rescript is gone, and the foundation of education has been changed to democracy, freedom, and respect for individual personality, all of which are new and unfamiliar to the Japanese. However, this new educational system disregarded the social background of the Japanese, and the people, having lost the old standard of moral judgement, have now become victims of extreme self-assertion and anti-social trends which threaten the new generation. I feel very keenly that there is no way to solve the question of developing personality according to the new order, other than standing firmly upon the Christian view of the Universe."

Considerable debate is under way as to whether to initiate a separate "morals course", combine one with either history or geography, or to renovate a modified version of the old Japanese pre-war "morals course." Under consideration by the Ministry of Education for some time now, usually in relation to developing "patriotism" or the "national spirit" it appears likely that some course bearing the title of "ethics" or "nurture of virtue" or something similar will soon be introduced. The recent Summer School for Christian Teachers sponsored by the Educational Association of Christian Schools had this problem as the central topic for discussion.

JAPAN BAPTIST CONVENTION MEETS

In mid July for 3 days at the Amagi Sanso Baptist Assembly Grounds the 11th General Baptist Convention was held with some 250 "Messengers" and about 50 Executive officers and visitors attending. A reorganization of the former eight sections of the convention into three main departments, the Church Related Education and Training Department, a Department of Evangelism (home and foreign) and an Institutional Department, including hospitals, schools, and social work, composed the main business of this Assembly. A final vote on this reorganization plan will be taken next year, and if favorable, the plan will become effective Jan. 1, 1959. Additional business of the Convention centered around plans for the Protestant Centennial activities in 1959, which is also the 70th anniversary of Baptist work in Japan. A history of 70 years of Baptist work will be published and a mass Anniversary Celebration will be held. This Convention also appointed a full-time secretary of Evangelism for the first time, the Rev. N. Arase. Executive General Secretary of the Convention is the Rev. S. Hikasa, with the Rev. K. Yuya, President (or Moderator). The Baptist Convention has one "Japanese missionary" already overseas, in Okinawa, and in Japan 102 missionaries from America are working hand in hand with about an equal number of Japanese pastors and unordained workers in Baptist churches from Hokkaido to Kyushu.

NEW MONTHLY PUBLISHED BY UNITED CHURCH

"The Gospel of Christ", a 4 page monthly designed chiefly for laymen and "seekers", and for the promotion of "Centennial Evangelism" has just made its debut. Actually it is a new name for the United Church's "Shinseimei", but with revised and simplified content in order to reach the lay reader. Released on Aug. 1, the first printing was for 10,000 copies. Publisher of the new organ is the Rev. Iwao Niwa, head of the General Affairs Bureau of the United Church, and the Editor is Mr. Akinao Fujita, who is well known to Japan's Christians as Editor of the United Church's Christokyo Shimpo. Subscription cost is ¥100 per year.

LATEST CHURCH STATISTICS

(Based on statistical tables)
 (in 1957 Christian Yearbook)
 (Kirisuto Nenkan)
 Published in the 1957 Japan Christian Yearbook
 (the 7 largest denominations)

Denomination	Churches & Preaching Centers	Membership	Japanese Pastors & Unordained workers	Missionaries
United Church of Christ	1,507	167,971	1377	378
Anglican Episcopal Church of Japan	346	39,603	319	75
Spirit of Jesus Church	179	23,530	59	--
Church of Christ in Japan	92	9,714	92	--
Baptist Convention of Japan	153	9,397	74	101
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Japan	102	7,250	77	49
Salvation Army	108	5,388	221	5
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Total Protestant Strength	4,312	322,135	3825	1440
By Comparison Total Catholic Strength	671	227,063	300	1088
By Comparison Orthodox Church Strength	140	34,391	62	----
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Grand Total	5,123	593,589	4187	2528

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BRIEFS

The Lacour Evangelistic Party who arrived July 4 departed from Japan Aug. 28.

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Dr. Donald Soper, famous English Evangelist, who will arrive in Japan Oct. 3 for an evangelistic campaign, will hold public rallies at the music hall in Hibiya Park Oct. 3-7.

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The Rev. T. Ohara, Pastor of Yodobashi Church, United Church of Christ, and President of Tokyo Bible School (Seisho Shingakko) left Japan Aug. 23 for an evangelistic tour through Hawaii, the United States, and Brazil in South America.

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Dr. Earnest Bentz, Ph.D., D.D., Professor of Church History on the Theological Faculty of Marburg University in Germany (the oldest Protestant University in the world - founded in 1527) just arrived in Japan, on invitation from Doshisha University in Kyoto to give the "Distinguished Lecturer Series" running from September until next March. Dr. Bentz said he accepted the invitation "because I am especially interested in studying the ecumenical life of the younger churches and in discussions between Christianity and non-Christian religions." He toured India, Burma, and Ceylon on the trip to Japan.

